

1-14. (CANCELED)

15. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An access unit for location in an opening in an upper floor, the access unit comprising:

a support frame having a generally O-shaped configuration with an open central region, the support frame including U-shaped first and second members with an open end of each U-shaped member facing one another, each of the first and the second members comprises a base frame of fixed width defining one end of the open central region, and a pair of spaced apart side arms extending parallel to one another from opposite ends of the base frame; the pair of side arms of the first member being telescopically received within the pair of side arms of the second member to facilitate adjustment of a length of the open central region; and the open central region, defined by the base frame and the pair of spaced apart side arms of the first member and the base frame and the pair of spaced apart side arms of the second member, being completely unobstructed and open without anything being located between the base frames for the first and the second members so as to allow unhindered passage of a person through the open central region, and the telescopic adjustment of the pair of spaced apart side arms facilitates desired spacing of the base frame of the first member from the base frame of the second member over a range of distances; and each of the spaced apart side arms of the second member having a clamp for temporary securing of the side arms of the first member to the side arms of the second member at a pre-determined relationship and maintaining the desired spacing of the base frame of the first member from the base frame of the second member;

only the second member having a pair of spaced apart vertically adjustable props which are pivotably attached adjacent the base frame of the second member for supporting the second member at a desired level;

the base frame of the first member having a flange arranged for overlying a support surface, at the first location, so that the flange at least partially overlaps a surface of the first location and solely vertically supports the first member at the first location being adapted for position at a first location and the base frame of the first member has a flange for overlying a support surface at the first location to facilitate retaining the base frame of the first member at the first location; and

the pair of spaced apart adjustable props of the second member facilitate positioning of the base frame of the second member at substantially a same level as the base frame of the first member, supported by the flange, so as to position the support frame of the access unit within a stairwell in a substantially horizontal orientation.

16. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The access unit according to claim 15, wherein a length of each adjustable prop is variable to facilitate maintaining the access unit in one of a horizontal orientation and at a desired angle relative to horizontal.

17. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The access unit according to claim 15, further comprising a removable platform member for covering the open central region, when the platform member is in a first working position, and preventing passage of one of the person and an article located above the support unit from inadvertently passing through the open central region; and

the platform member, when the platform member is in a second position removed from the open central region, allowing unimpeded passage of at least one of the person and the article through the open central region.

18. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The access unit according to claim 17, wherein the platform member is at least in part of open construction to enable viewing through the open central region when the platform member is in the first working position.

19. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The access unit according to claim 17, wherein a length of each of the pair of spaced apart side arms of the first member is greater than a length the base frame of the first member.

20. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The access unit according to claim 15, wherein a space between the base frame of the first member and the base frame of the second member is completely unobstructed, a space between the opposed legs of the first member is completely unobstructed, and a space between the opposed legs of the second member is completely unobstructed.

21. (CANCELED)

22. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A constructional unit comprising:

a support frame which is O-shaped in plan bounding an open central region, the support frame including first and second members which are each U-shaped in plan, each of the first and the second members being in the form of a base frame of fixed width from which extend two side arms and an open end of each of the first and the second U-shaped members facing one another;

the first and the second members each having their side arms are telescopically engaged to define sides to the open central region of the O-shaped support frame;

the telescopic engagement providing for the spacing of the first base frame from the second base frame to be adjustable over a range of distances and for

the temporary securing of the first member to the second member at a predetermined spacing;

the base frame of the first member being provided with means whereby the base frame is located at a first level at a first working location; the second member being adapted for location at a second working location off-set from the first working location, by means of at least one extensible leg, the, or each, extensible leg being pivotally attached at or near one end of the leg to the base frame of the second member or to a side arm thereof, the at least one extensible leg being pivotally attached only to the second member or the side arm thereof;

the opposite end to the one end of the, or each, extensible leg being adapted for location vertically below the first level; and

the first member having a flange arranged for overlying a support surface, at the first location, so that the flange at least partially overlaps a surface of the first location and solely vertically supports the first member at the first location.

23. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The constructional unit according to claim 22, wherein the, or each, extensible leg is provided with a strut with first and second ends, the first end of the strut being attachable to the extensible leg ~~telescopic~~, the second end of the strut being attachable to the second member, the prop in use providing for a fixed angular alignment of the leg relative to the second member.

24. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The constructional unit according to claim 22, wherein a platform member is provided to which, in a first working configuration, serves to cover the open central region of the support frame so as to prevent the inadvertent passage of an article or person through the open central region and a second working configuration wherein the platform member is withdrawn to allow access through the open central region.

25. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The constructional unit according to claim 24, wherein the platform member is, at least in part, of openwork construction to enable a view to be obtained through the open central region, when the platform member is in the first working configuration.

26. (NEW) A constructional unit (11) for preventing at least one of people and articles from passing through a passageway in a surface of an upper floor, the constructional unit (11) comprising:

a first support member (13) comprising two side arms (16, 17) and a base (15), each of the two side arms (16, 17) of the first support member (13) has an end that is coupled to a respective end of the base (15) of the first support member (13), such that the two side arms (16, 17) of the first support member (13) extend from the

base (15) of the first support member (13) substantially parallel to each other and normal to the base (15) of the first support member (13), and such that the first support member (13) is substantially U-shaped;

a second support member (14) comprising two side arms (19, 20) and a base (18), each of the two side arms (19, 20) of the second support member (14) has an end that is coupled to a respective end of the base (18) of the second support member (14), such that the two side arms (19, 20) of the second support member (14) extend from the base (18) of the second support member (14) substantially parallel to each other and normal to the base (18) of the second support member (14), and such that the second support member (14) is substantially U-shaped;

ends of the two side arms (16, 17) of the first support member (13) that are remote from the base (15) of the first support member (13) are telescopically received by ends (19A, 20A) of the two side arms (19, 20) of the second support member (14) that are remote from the base (18) of the second support member (14);

two clamps (C1, C2) secure the two side arms (16, 17) of the first support member (13) to the two side arms (19, 20) of the second support member (14) such that the first support member (13) is adjustably secured to second support member (14), the first and the second support elements (13, 14) forming a substantially planar support frame having an open region (12) defined by the two side arms (16, 17; 19, 20) and the bases (15, 18) of the first and the second support elements (13, 14);

two props (31, 35) each having an end that is attached to a respective one of the two side arms (19, 20) of the second support member (14), the two props (31, 35) extending from the two side arms (19, 20) of the second support member (14), the two props (31, 35) being supported by a surface that is horizontally lower than the surface of the upper floor;

two braces (32, 36) each having one end coupled to a respective one of the two side arms (19, 20) of the second support member (14) and an opposite end coupled to a respective one of the two props (31, 35) to secure the two props (31, 35) with respect to the support frame;

the base (15) of the first support member (13) comprises a flange (15A) which extends from the base (15) of the first support member (13) in an opposite direction from the two side arms (16, 17) of the first support member (13), such that the flange (15A) contacts and overlays the surface of the upper floor along an edge of the passageway to support a first side of the support frame; and

the two props (31, 35) are adjustable such that, when the first side of the support frame is supported by the flange (15A) on the surface of the upper floor along

the edge of the passageway, the support frame is adjustable to be located within the passageway and substantially coplanar with the upper floor.

27. (NEW) The constructional unit (11) according to claim 26, wherein the two props (31, 35) are pivotable with respect to the two side arms (19, 20) of the second support member (14) between a folded position, in which the two props (31, 35) lie adjacent the two side arms (19, 20) of the second support member (14), and an extended position, in which the two props (31, 35) extend substantially normal to the support frame.

28. (NEW) The constructional unit (11) according to claim 27, wherein the ends of the two props (31, 35) are attached to the two side arms (19, 20) of the second support member (14) such that the two props (31, 35) only extend below the planar support frame.

29. (NEW) The constructional unit (11) according to claim 26, wherein the ends of the two props (31, 35) are attached to the two side arms (19, 20) of the second support member (14) at a location along the two side arms (19, 20) of the second support member (14) that is spaced from the end of the two side arms (19, 20) of the second support member (14) coupled to the base (18) of the second support member (18).

30. (NEW) The constructional unit (11) according to claim 26, wherein a platform (40) is supported by the support frame and is adjustable between a closed position, in which the platform (40) encloses the open region (12) of the support frame and the passageway in the surface of the upper floor, and a retracted position, in which the platform (40) is at least partially displaced from the open region (12) of the support frame and the passageway in the surface of the upper floor.

31. (NEW) The constructional unit (11) according to claim 26, wherein only the two props (31, 35) and the flange (15A) support the support frame within the passageway in the surface of the upper floor.

32. (NEW) The constructional unit (11) according to claim 26, wherein the first side of the support frame is supported only by the flange (15A).